

PRESS RELEASE
SENATOR KENNETH L. GITTENS

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**SEN. GITTENS EXTENDS CONGRATULATIONS TO COLONEL DEBORAH HOWELL
ON BEING TAPPED AS THE FIRST FEMALE TO HEAD THE V.I. NATIONAL GUARD**

St. Croix, V.I. – June 25, 2015 – Senator Kenneth L. Gittens, chairman of the Committee on Rules and Judiciary, is extending congratulations to Colonel Deborah Howell, and her husband, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Dennis Howell, on their recent outstanding accomplishments.

Colonel Howell, who has served as chief of staff for the senator, was recently appointed by Governor Kenneth Mapp to serve as the next Adjutant General of our Virgin Islands National Guard. “My first reaction was excitement and in less than a few minutes, I had mixed feelings, whereas, I was excited and at the same time sad – as I thought about the void in my office. However, ultimately I am happy for her and the Virgin Islands National Guard. She is an outstanding leader and a hard worker, and has led my office staff effectively for the past two and a half years. So, I am confident that she will do well heading up our Virgin Islands National Guard as its adjutant general,” Senator Gittens said.

Senator Gittens said Colonel Howell, whose last day in his office is today (Friday), joined the Army straight out of high school in 1978, and came back to the territory in 1980. She was commissioned by the former Virgin Islands Military Academy, where she attended Officer Candidate School and has served in a number of leadership roles in the military until her retirement in 2010.

“It is always good to see one of our own return home and continue to propel our community forward. Though this is a bitter-sweet occasion, I am proud of her achievements, especially seeing that she is the territory’s first female who will be heading up the Virgin Islands National Guard and I am grateful for the time that she was able to serve with my office and I wish her well as she moves on to this new chapter,” Senator Gittens added.

Senator Gittens said it was also fitting that he wished her husband, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Dennis Howell congratulations and best wishes on his retirement from U.S. military service after 42 dedicated years. CWO5 Howell is also noted as the Virgin Islander with the longest history of uniformed service with the Virgin Islands National Guard.

“CWO5 Howell’s loyalty to our country and its people has been noted with his various medals and awards and his outstanding service in various areas over his career. He has been synonymous with strong work ethics and shown service above self, demonstrating the true meaning of living out the ideals of what the military and our country stands for,” Senator Gittens said.

Senator Gittens said the military stands ready because of strong leaders like Colonel Howell and CWO5 Howell. “God Bless them both and God Bless the United States and the Virgin Islands,” Senator Gittens concluded.

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